



Town of South Bethany Committee Report from April 17, 2023

The Canal Water Quality Committee met on April 17th at 10:00am online with all members attending except Pete Trelenberg.

Town Council Liaison Tim Shaw was present.

Minutes were approved and adopted for the 3/27/23 meeting.

TC Updates: Tim updated the committee regarding his participation in an all-day meeting with DEMA and DNREC on trying to take a statewide approach to both ocean and bayside flooding. Representatives from the Corps of Engineer were also present. One concept discussed was floodgates at “the ditch” and the White Creek. This will be a longer-term project. He also shared that he learned that there may be DEMA funding to raise houses that are in a flood plain. Tim will share this with Town Council.

Canal Maintenance Work Group: Reviewed the updated schedule for the Algae Harvesting, deferred to start on May 1st for the first week of the two weeks contracted with Solitude. Town Manager is working on finalizing the logistics and related details.

The Committee discussed the need to put in place the general maintenance contract once again for the May through September season for the Canals, particularly the canal ends that is separate from the specific Algae Harvesting efforts. Chris is going to meet with Envirotech to review this past year’s 2022 contract and performance to identify areas to improve, with the direction from the Committee to request an updated proposal for the 2023 May through September season. The Committee will be reviewing the renewal proposal to include agreed upon modifications at the next CWQC meeting on May 15th with the objective to consider submitting to Town Council for possible action.

Code/Communications: Bob updated the Committee on activities on Earth Day coming up on April 22nd, and the continuation of the ongoing support of information for the various updates and newsletters from the Town and SBPOA.

Floating Wetlands (FW): The final step in the Envirotech contract for the fall pruning and replanting of selected mats was completed last week. This replanting was deferred to this spring due to the delays in finalizing last Fall. One of the Committee members would do a site review of the mats with the replanting to confirm the work was completed so the final invoice could be submitted to the Town by 4/21 in order to get paid in April out of the budgeted FY 23 funds.

Gary provided an additional update on the ongoing discussions on how to best address the ongoing concerns of the FW program. What is emerging is the separation of the need to address the continued problems and end-of-useful lives of the current mats and FWs with what a new program with improved mats and other program changes could provide relative to the overall increased awareness, water quality and ecosystem of the Canals. A small group will convene to discuss further, with the possibility of bringing back some options and recommendations at a future meeting.

Grants: Chris noted that no updates yet from the Town regarding the submitted grant application with DEMA in December for one of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs for a flood safety feasibility study for the York Road area in the South section of the Town.

Water Quality: Dave provided an update that Canal water temperatures are climbing and warmer than this time last year. Average temperatures are above 20c. The volunteers will be taking samples tomorrow and will update the committee on algae levels to provide additional input for the Harvesting effort. The Committee discussed inviting Ed Whereat from the University of Delaware to attend one of our meetings. It would be good to hear his thoughts on the larger Delaware water system and how we fit in to the whole, along with his thoughts on the trends related to the key quality and related data of our Canals and adjacent inland bays. Dave will follow up with Ed on this.

Other Committee Business: None discussed.

No public comment.

The next meeting will be on May 15th at 10:00am online. Members of the public are welcome.
Reported by Chris Vanuga – Chairman